



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings and best wishes for a healthy and interesting 2021. Welcome to new members and to our three new committee members – Linda Beckett, Special Interest Groups Coordinator, Judith Nathan, Newsletter Coordinator, and John Rutherford, Treasurer.

We ended the past year with most of our scheduled lectures being presented despite the interruptions of Covid-19. For 2021 we have an exciting lineup of presenters and topics for our largest ever number of Embassy and mid-winter lunch lectures. The first of the planned **59** lectures begins on **Tuesday 23 February**. Once again our three Programme Coordinators (Robin Halliday, Rae Julian and Doug Helps) have done an excellent job of organising lecture presenters. Details of the first few months of the scheduled lectures are provided in this newsletter and on our website. Check the website for the most updated programme.

At our last meeting the committee considered the possibility of replacing some Embassy lectures with online Zoom presentations. Points noted included the social nature of meeting in person, the suitability of the Embassy as a venue, privacy and copyright implications of recording outside of the controlled environment of Zoom and the variation in skills of lecturers able to present via Zoom. We agreed that our lectures would continue to be delivered at the Embassy but that if a lock-down situation reoccurs (or the Embassy becomes unavailable) we would once again deliver via Zoom.

Such a situation occurs after Term 2 lectures finish on 9 July followed by a lengthy break of five weeks. This period includes our normal break for the school holidays and the NZ International Film Festival which the Embassy hosts. During the Festival period we plan to use Zoom to deliver an *additional* four online lectures (3, 6, 10 and 13 August). This decision is for this year only and will be reviewed for any future years. The Programming Coordinators believe it provides an opportunity to invite lecturers from other parts of New Zealand and possibly overseas – depending on time zones.

The contract with the Embassy has been finalised and agreed for 2021 and 2022 at an increased rental. The change to our Rules that defines platform and delivery mode of all U3A meetings (including the Annual General Meeting) has been approved by the NZ Companies Office and Charities Services. The Rules are publicly accessible from the websites. At the 2019 AGM members were advised that subscriptions would be increased in June 2020 but the decision was reversed as a result of lower lecture costs with Zoom replacing the Embassy venue during Covid-19 restrictions. The Committee has decided that the 2021-22 subscription be increased to \$40. This increase is to pay for the extra lectures and the increased cost of hiring the Embassy.

Many of our Special Interest Groups have begun to meet already. Linda Beckett, Special Interest Groups Coordinator has already met most of the leaders of the groups. If you have any questions about the groups please contact Linda. Dougal Congalton and Aidan Kay have organised the design and printing of a U3A business card. The cards provide contact details and U3A activities. Please feel free to give them to anyone who may be interested in joining. Cards are available at the Embassy desk where you scan your membership card and also will be available on the balustrade as you enter the lecture theatre. Aidan Kay has been planning holiday activities that include visits to Stonehenge, Wellington City Council Archives, and others to be confirmed. Keep an eye on our website for updates to the visits.

I look forward to meeting with many of you and enjoying another stimulating U3A year.

Barbara Crump

President